United Nations CEDAW/C/2003/I/3/Add.1

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
7 November 2002
English
Original: English/Spanish

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Twenty-eighth session
13-31 January 2003
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Implementation of article 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations on the Implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

1. On behalf of the Committee, the Secretariat invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), on 18 September 2002, to submit to the Committee a report on information provided by States to FAO on the implementation of article 11 and related articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which would supplement the information contained in the reports of States parties to the Convention that will be considered at the twenty-eighth session.

2. Other information sought by the Committee refer to activities, programmes and policy decisions undertaken by FAO to promote the implementation of article 11 and related articles of the Convention.

3. The report annexed hereto has been submitted in compliance with the Committee's request.

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Annex

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Kenya

1. According to FAO statistics for Kenya, the population estimate for 2000 was 30,669,000 people, of which 67 per cent lived in rural areas.

2. In 2000, it was estimated that 51.5 per cent of the population was economically active, of which 75.4 per cent worked in the agricultural sector. The share of economically active women represented 47 per cent, of which 49.5 per cent were working in agriculture.

3. On almost all counts, 2000 was a very difficult year for Kenya. The severe drought that began in 1999 continued to afflict large parts of the country, the economy shrank, budgetary support from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank did not continue past the first tranche, presidential succession dominated the political debate and the HIV/AIDS crisis continued to worsen. Most news of Kenya, inside and outside the country, was negative. The bright spots, of which there were a number, came from creativity, in response to crises rather than to any generalized improvement. In the foreground of attention, there were few signs of recovery or new policy directions that would turn the situation around.

4. The drought continued to dominate the sector. A total of 254,000 tons of food were provided, with emergency operations extending to February 2002, targeting 3.1 million people. The maize crop was only 2.3 million tons, compared with the long-term average of 3 million tons. Coffee production continued to decline and is now below half its peak volume. The value of tea exports declined in line with the world price, but the value of horticulture exports increased significantly.

The FAO programme

5. The FAO programme in Kenya coalesced around two themes that relate to the positive developments: (a) the expansion of "farmers' field schools" within the Special Programme for Food Security as a means of improving production and incomes through better technology options; and (b) food security policy and information, drought management and emergency response.

6. FAO implemented a project targeting the production of horticulture crops for export by women's groups in Central Province. The farmers' field school project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in western Kenya continued to expand through the multiplier effect of farmer-led field schools, using field school graduates to facilitate the work of new groups. There are 104 field schools funded by this project for the current agricultural season, of which 62 are farmer-led and 58 are extensionist-led. Graduation exercises in 2001 honoured more than 3,800 farmer participants in western Kenya.

7. The success of the programme is clearly the responsibility of the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly at the district level and below. A new

development during the year was the establishment of a network of field school graduates, which provides an exceptional opportunity for outreach and collective actions. The strength of the programme comes from the support for existing farmers' groups, particularly women's groups, empowering them to take responsibility for programme resources and allowing them to draw on the services of the extension and research systems. This combination has instilled a high degree of ownership and has motivated both farmers and extensionists to become more active in searching for and trying out new production and marketing options. The positive elements all existed within the system prior to the existence of the programme (research results, extension staff, organized farmer groups); the impact of the programme has come from combining these elements to work towards the common goal of increased food security and improved livelihoods. This strength relates directly to the greater willingness of the Government, evidenced during the year, to experiment with community participation in the management of public resources and to the decentralization of programme responsibilities to district-level structures.

8. Wherever possible, FAO emergency operations in Kenya are implemented at the community level through relief committees, whose members are predominantly women. The committees are often chaired by women. Since women are the ones taking care of agriculture production, it is mostly women who take part (and are interested) in the seed distribution programmes. The FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division has been working closely with the agricultural extension service, and many of the extension workers are, in fact, women. In addition, women are involved in seed trade, and FAO, through seed purchases at the local level, has strengthened the role of local women traders.

Dimitra project: rural women and development

9. Dimitra, an information and communication project implemented by FAO in 1998, collects information on projects concerning rural women, food security and sustainable development. By making this information available, the project aims at increasing the visibility of the contributions of rural women to development via traditional means of communication and new information technologies. Dimitra seeks to increase gender awareness among development actors and to promote information exchange and dissemination. There are 11 organizations from Kenya listed in the Dimitra database (www.fao.org/sd/dimitra). These organizations have been engaged in a total of 49 projects. The Forest Action Network — FAN — based in Kenya is the Dimitra focal point for Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

El Salvador

10. The Republic of El Salvador is located in Central America and has a surface area of 21,040 km^2. Its capital is San Salvador and, according to FAO statistics, its estimated population for 2000 was 6,278,000, of which 51 per cent was female and 49 per cent was male.

11. Around 54 per cent of the population live in rural areas and over 80 per cent of agricultural producers work less than three hectares of land. Their social indicators are among the worst in Latin America: in 1998, GDP per capita was $1,850. However, in socio-economic terms, the UNDP Human Development Report 2000

shows a clear geographical imbalance between metropolitan and rural areas — the latter being more backward (18:1).

12. According to FAO statistics for 2000, 29 per cent of the active population was working in the agricultural sector, of which 8 per cent was female and 92 per cent was male. However, owing to financial problems within the Salvadoran Government which affected the conduct of the census, FAO was unable to support the preparation of the fourth national census of agriculture, which might have produced different figures.

13. Despite the fact that the agricultural sector barely expanded at all between 1997 and 1999, it remains important in terms of employment and added value. It continues to provide employment for almost a quarter of the labour force, generates one third of the country's export earnings and meets almost 70 per cent of domestic food requirements. The four main crops are maize, beans, rice and sorghum and the main export crops are coffee and sugar. The agricultural sector is a cause for concern, since in recent years the country has been unable to meet domestic demand for basic grains. Cheap imports are contributing to the financial community's disinterest in investing in the sector and, in addition, government policies have increasingly focused on urban issues, tacitly acknowledging that agriculture is destined to play a minor role in the country's future.

FAO activities

14. FAO activities in the Latin American and Caribbean region fall within the framework of the strategic areas and needs identified as priorities for the advancement of women, and form part of the FAO plan of action to support rural women. The emphasis is on promoting institutional change in the design of development policies and strategies, thereby enabling States to focus on responding to the differing needs of men and women.

15. The FAO programme in El Salvador comprises the project "Sustainable development in mountainous zones — phase II" and two projects relating to emergency assistance for small farmers affected by earthquakes and drought. Those projects were approved in 2001 and 2002 and were intended to help the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock restart production for 10,000 farming families by providing them with the necessary agricultural input packages for seeding in 2001 and 2002. Female heads of household are some of the most vulnerable beneficiaries of these projects.

16. In addition, small-scale projects, such as the TeleFood projects entitled "Strengthening of production systems for meat and eggs in family-run poultry farms in mountainous zones" and "Promoting non-traditional small animal production" (www.fao.org/food), are being implemented and, pursuant to a letter of agreement signed between FAO and Project Concern International, nutrition-related activities are being carried out.